

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2967

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3090

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES: PRIME MINISTER RETURNS FROM NATO

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES, SPEAKING TO LARGE WELCOMING CROWD JUNE 1, REITERATED GOP COMMITMENT TO NATO. POLITICAL PARTIES, EXCEPT SOCIALISTS, ARE CLIMBING ABOARD "UNITARY ACTION" BANDWAGON. SECOND ABBREVIATED EDITION OF "REPUBLICA" APPEARED MAY 31 BUT FUTURE OF PAPER IN DOUBT. CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH OPENS JUNE 2 COULD PRODUCE FURTHER DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT AND SOCIALISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. VASCO GONCALVES RETURNS: ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD JAMMED AIRPORT AND SURROUNDING STREETS JUNE 1 TO GIVE PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES AND RETURNING NATO DELEGATION HERO'S WELCOME. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AND MOST LEADERS OF GOP PRESENT. TWIN THEMES OF VASCO GONCALVES REMARKS TO CROWD WERE: (A) GOP DELEGATION HAD SCORED IMPORTANT VICTORY IN BRUSSELS IN "BATTLE OF INFORMATION;" AND (B) GOP DETERMINATION TO MEET FULLY ITS NATO COMMITMENTS. PRIME MINISTER NOTED DISTORTIONS WHICH HE SAID
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WERE WIDESPREAD EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO FOLLOWED PORTUGUESE EVENTS

CLOSELY. HE CALLED ATTENTION TO "REPUBLICA" CASE, IMPLYING THAT IT HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY DISTORTED TO EMBARRASS GOP ON EVE OF NATO SUMMIT. VASCO GONCALVES ECHOED STATEMENTS MADE IN BRUSSELS RE DECISION TO REMAIN IN NATO AND DETERMINATION TO MEET ALL COMMITMENTS. HE REITERATED THAT PORTUGAL WAS NOT "TROJAN HORSE" WITHIN ALLIANCE. PORTUGAL HAD NO INTENTION OF ALTERING BALANCE OF FORCES IN EUROPE. PORTUGAL, HE SAID, COULD NOT IGNORE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT IN WHICH IT FOUND ITSELF. IT COULD MAKE MORE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO LASTING PEACE WITHIN RATHER THAN OUTSIDE NATO.

2. POPULAR DEMOCRATS (PPD) SWEPT ALONG BY "UNITARY ACTION" TIDE ENDORSED DEMONSTRATION IN ELEVENTH-HOUR STATEMENT. PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDP-CDE) ALSO GETTING ON BANDWAGON BY ANNOUNCING IT WILL INCREASE POPULAR MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES. SOCIALISTS, ON DEFENSIVE, ISSUED CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT SAYING IT INAPPROPRIATE FOR PARTY TO TAKE FORMAL POSITION ON RALLY IN VIEW ITS ANNOUNCED NON-PARTISAN CHARACTER. PS JUSTICE MINISTER SALGADO ZENHA, HOWEVER, ATTENDED RALLY AND PS CONTINUES IN GOVERNMENT.

3. "REPUBLICA" REAPPEARS: AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF "REPUBLICA" WAS BACK ON THE STREETS MAY 31. FOLLOWING THE ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO PUBLISH USING "O SETUBALENSE" PRESSES, RAUL REGO AND COMPANY HAVE FOUND -- FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST -- OTHER FACILITIES IN LISBON (LISBON 3001).

4. COMMENT: VASCO GONCALVES COMMENTS ON NATO WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE REPORTED ELSEWHERE (SECTO 2080, USNATO 3058). FOCUS OF HIS REMARKS DIFFERS SOMEWHAT FROM THOSE RECENTLY MADE BY ADMIRAL AZEVEDO (LISBON 2971). VASCO GONCALVES REFERENCE TO EXISTING BALANCE OF FORCES IN EUROPE CONTRASTS WITH AZEVEDO REFERENCE TO NEED TO STRENGTHEN ALLIANCE MILITARILY TO REGAIN PARITY WITH WARSAW PACT.

5. GENERAL THEME IN PRESS HERE WAS THAT VASCO GONCALVES STOOD UP TO US ON DEFENDING PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION AND SIDED WITH PROGRESSIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THAT FAVOR GRADUAL LESSENING OF TENSIONS BETWEEN COMPETING BLOCS RATHER THAN FURTHER MILITARY STRENGTHENING OF NATO.

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